

McKever...

Continued from page 6

died of phthisis florida at the age of 26 (in reality, she was 28). A.D. McKever was again a widower, this time with six children to care for, the oldest being 13 years of age.

For eight years after Emma's death, A.D. remained unmarried. But then another trip to Texas and a rekindling of his friendship with Martha Jane Daniel. In 1903 Martha Jane was 33 years old and unmarried. A.D. McKever was 46, but the 13-year difference in their ages did not matter. They were married on June 10, 1903, in Dallas and traveled immediately by train to Portland. From there they took the boat upriver to Camas.

When the McKevers arrived home youngest daughter, Violet McKever was quite ill. She passed away at 4 p.m. on July 8, 1903, at age of nine years. The cherry trees were laden with fruit that was not quite ripe, and the local doctor said the cause of Violet's death was eating green cherries and drinking milk. However, Martha Jane McKever always thought that Violet died of undiagnosed appendicitis.

In 1898, 14-year-old Charles McKever went to work at the Camas Paper Mill. There were 87 employees at that time who worked 11 hour days for \$1.50 per day. His older brother Samuel was 16 and may have always worked at the mill. Arthur (Happy) McKever later became a machine tender on the Cannon Ball. "Happy" moved to The

Dalles for a short time in 1908, but moved back to Camas "when he had spent all of his money" per the LaCamas Post, January 1908 edition.

More bad news came for the McKever family in 1903 when Charles was 19. He lost his left forearm in an industrial accident after five years of mill service.

On May 18, 1904, John Aubrey (Jack) McKever was born to A.D. and Martha Jane. Although Martha Jane always called her new son "Aubrey,"

In late 1905 the McKevers purchased a fine family home at the lake that been built in 1902 by Louis Tidland.

In 1908, A.D. McKever built a two-story wooden store building at the southeast corner of Northeast Fourth and Clark (now Adams), on the property he had purchased several years before for \$300. Two of the first businesses to occupy McKever's building were the Red Front Meat Market and Cowan's Cigar Store, which was a local gathering spot for the men of the town. The upper floor of the McKever Building was used as a lodge hall and for church services.

Around 1909, Glenn Cottrell and his father ran an electric power line out to McKevers for the water pumping. McKever paid \$30 per month for the electricity and because of this had to raise the monthly rates to his customers. There were many complaints. He built another wooden water tower, this one 35 feet tall, by the Gittings place (near the current Hilltop Market location). Shortly afterwards, McKever sold his water company to Pittcock-Leadbetter who

continued to use McKever's mode of operation for a couple of years.

In 1912, Pittcock-Leadbetter developed their own facilities across the road from the lake slough, building the Butler reservoir and installing a six-inch steel water line.

Jack McKever grew up on the McKever property by the lake, and attended the small school by the old sawmill close to the high school.

A.D.'s son, Charles D. McKever married Bertha Leona Smith and they had four children. First Veva Dora, then Gordon Richard (who later owned "McKever's Service" at the lake), Marjorie Leona, and young Charles D. McKever, Jr., born on Oct. 20, 1917. Charles was to die in an automobile accident in 1935 at the young age of 18.

In 1920 A.D. McKever bought the office building formerly occupied by Patton & McAllister, and moved it onto an empty lot he owned on Northeast Fourth Avenue between Clark and Columbia streets.

Son Arthur "Happy" McKever died at 35 years of age on Nov. 3, 1921. He shared a plot at the Camas Cemetery with his mother Dora, his sister Violet, his stepmother Emma, and aunt Alice Vititow.

In 1922, the old wooden McKever building was moved to face Clark Street. Another old-timer, Gus Karnath, did the moving. A basement was dug and the new McKever Building was erected. Citizen's State Bank moved its headquarters in.

The old wooden McKever building suffered roof damage from a fire during the

1920s, possibly in 1923 when a whole block burned in the downtown area. The fire did not destroy the building, however, because it was purchased in the 1930s by Dr. A.E. Bird, who had it demolished in late 1958.

The "new" McKever Building stands in its same location to this day, looking a little tired and worn, but still housing many businesses across from the mill's administration office at Northeast Fourth and Adams.

The City of Camas purchased the water system Pittcock-Leadbetter in 1923, and still owns the Camas water supply to this day.

Archibald Duncan McKever lived a long, full life and passed away July 8, 1937, at 4 p.m. at the age of 80. His beloved wife, Martha Jane and his children were by his side. Martha Jane exclaimed, "Why, he died at exactly the same time and date as Violet." And yes, he had—33 years later to the minute!

Frank and Jack McKever were trustees of their father's estate and sold the three downtown houses shortly thereafter. Grandma Martha Jane McKever lived to be 90, dying in 1960.

Today, fifth generation McKevers are still living in Camas. They are quite proud of Archibald Duncan McKever, a man of no schooling but with a sharp engineering mind and good business head for buying and developing property. Here was a man who contributed so much to early Camas, downtown and the lake area. A.D. "Mac" McKever will always be remembered by historians as a very "vital" Camas pioneer.